



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653

mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

July 26, 2005

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The Iowa Fishing Report is now being issued every-other week. The next fishing report will come out Aug. 2.

DES MOINES FEMALE PEREGRINE FALCON ON THE MEND

BOONE – An adult female peregrine falcon was recovering from surgery Monday after she was discovered injured in Des Moines. An x-ray revealed a compound fracture of its right wing. The female, 8/T, was transported to the Macbride Raptor Clinic at Kirkwood Community College for treatment.

8/T was fledged from a nest tray for falcons at Colonnade Building in Minneapolis in 2002. She had paired with male 93T in Des Moines and successfully fledged seven young in 2004 – 2005. Around Iowa six other peregrine pairs with the Des Moines' pair produced 21 young in 2005.

Joe and Amanda Jordan discovered the injured falcon on July 23, and reported it to wildlife rehabilitator Beth Brown, from Osceola, who contacted the DNR. Veterinarian Dennis Riordan, of Ankeny Vet Clinic, conducted the x-ray.

For more information, contact Pat Schlarbaum, Iowa DNR, at 515-432-2823.

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FISHING REGULATIONS REMOVED AT MILL CREEK LAKE BEGINNING AUG. 4

SPIRIT LAKE – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will remove the fishing regulations at Mill Creek Lake, in O’Brien County, and in the outlet creek from the Mill Creek Lake dam to the confluence with Mill Creek between Aug. 4 and Nov. 1.

Fish may be taken by any means, except by the use of dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices or any stupefying substances.

Mill Creek Lake will be drained by the O’Brien County Conservation Board to repair the outlet and control structures, and to clean the silt retention pond. The lake will be re-stocked in the spring of 2006 with bass and bluegill. Channel catfish will be added later next year.

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GRANTS AVAILABLE TO RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

AMES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has grant money available for Iowa’s rural fire departments to help with equipment in battling wildfires. The grants offer funding assistance for wildfire suppression equipment, personal protective equipment, and communications equipment.

Gail Kantak with the DNR’s Forestry Bureau, said fire departments will receive information about the grants soon. Kantak is also encouraging fire departments to send her a Wildland Fire Report whenever they respond to a wildland fire or provide assistance to a prescribed or controlled wildland fire. Wildland Fire reporting forms are available at www.iowadnr.com/forestry/fire.html. Departments actively returning these reports can receive priority points for the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant application.

“It is important to return these reports so we can assess the actual demands on our rural fire departments as a result of wildfire,” Kantak said. Wildland fire reports will be compiled locally and nationally then reported to Congress.

Grant applications are being mailed to each Iowa rural fire department and available online at www.iowadnr.com/forestry/fire.html. The information package includes:

Volunteer Fire Assistance Application: A 50-50 cost share grant for wildfire equipment with a maximum grant of \$3,500 per department. Applications are due Nov. 15, 2005.

Iowa Wildland Fire Report Form: This form can be copied, completed and faxed in as wildland fires are responded to and as prescribed/controlled fires are assisted with.

Big Rivers Forest Fire Management Compact: A 50-50 cost share for personal protective equipment. The cost share for Iowa is limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Gail Kantak at 515-233-1161 for funding availability.

Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau Fire Program Opportunities: Outlines the programming opportunities available to Iowa's fire suppression agencies by the Iowa DNR forestry bureau in cooperation with federal, state and local partners.

"Dry Hydrant Grants are also currently available," Kantak said "If a community or a region within a fire departments response area is in need of more available water sources, please consider dry hydrants as an option. They do not have to be a standard pond or water-body access."

For more information, contact Kantak at 515-233-1161.

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DNR OFFICERS ARREST FOUR ON MARIJUANA CHARGES

DUBUQUE – Conservation officers arrested four individuals along the Mississippi River at Dubuque for possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, and delivering a controlled substance to a minor. The individuals are Craig Anthony Folstad, 38, of St. Louis Park, Minn., Blake James Folstad, 21, of Maple Grove, Minn., and two 17-year-old minors.

Officers Brian Roffman and Nate Johnson were checking anglers along the Mississippi River at 6:30 p.m., July 23, when they detected the smell of burning marijuana and witnessed three individuals passing around a smoking pipe.

Officers seized a small wooden box of marijuana, a marijuana smoking pipe, a small Zip-lock bag of marijuana, another marijuana pipe and a zip lock bag with \$6,150 in cash from the individuals. A search of their vehicle produced three more marijuana pipes, a small quantity of marijuana, and more small Zip-lock bags.

The Dubuque County Sheriff's Department and the Dubuque Police Department provided assistance. The case was referred to the Dubuque County Drug Taskforce.

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ELK ROCK ANTLERLESS DEER HUNT ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

KNOXVILLE - Hunters interested in the archery only antlerless deer hunt at Elk Rock State Park must apply by mail or email by Aug. 8 to be entered in the drawing for a license. The application must include the name, complete address, phone number and number of licenses wanted (maximum of two per person). Incomplete applications will be discarded. Phone calls are not accepted. The hunt is Oct. 1 to Nov. 30.

Applicants will be selected by a drawing and must complete and archery proficiency test. The proficiency test is mandatory for all new hunt participants and failure to attend will cause the application to be rescinded. The proficiency test is scheduled for 10 a.m., Aug. 20, at the Elk Rock State Park office, 811 146th Ave., near of Knoxville. Participants who took the bow hunter class last year do not need to re-qualify.

Upon completion, the applicant will receive a registration confirmation slip that will allow them to purchase the antlerless deer license, available only at the Marion County Recorder's office.

There are 50 antlerless only licenses available for the Elk Rock State Park hunt. The first license costs \$26, and a second is \$11. A single buck license will be drawn for in 2006 for all hunters who take two does in 2005.

For more information, call the park office at 641-842-6008.

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KIDS STORY CONTEST - BOATING SAFETY SIDEKICKS WANT TO READY A STORY BY YOU

It can be a short story or what some people call an essay. The title should be "Why I wear my life jacket." It should be one to two pages long. Your story can be handwritten, printed by computer or e-mailed to us.

It should include your boating experiences and why you wear your lifejacket. The Sidekicks will read all entries and award 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in the following age groups: 4 to 7 years, 8 to 11 years, and 12 to 15 years of age. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards receive a \$100 savings bond.

Awards will be based on good grammar, punctuation, composition, and the story told. All awarded entries will be posted on the Sidekicks website. Only first name, state and age will be identified with award entries posted on the website.

The deadline for entries is Nov. 1, 2005. E-mail stories should be an MS Word file attached to your e-mail and sent to sidekicks@safeboatingcouncil.org. Or, you can send your stories to us by mail at Sidekicks Life Jacket Stories, National Safe Boating Council, P.O. Box 509, Bristow, VA 20136. All entries should include your name, age and mailing address. Visit www.boatingsidekicks.com.

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[Electronic photos available]

BACKYARD BIRD PROJECT BECOMES PURPLE MARTIN PARADISE

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

LAKE MILLS--Mark Wilkinson's big backyard is a purple martin paradise. Plenty of open sky for high speed maneuvering, a cattail bordered pond for drinking and bathing, nearby grasslands for food. Best of all, there is what purple martins need most -- lots and lots of free housing.

By the time mid-summer rolls around, the colony has become a beehive of activity as scores of adult martins dive, swoop, and twitter while bringing nonstop deliveries of protein rich insects to their growing young.

It's hard to imagine that this thriving project began just four years ago when Wilkinson decided to install a single factory-made, aluminum martin house. Prepared for a long wait, Wilkinson was pleasantly surprised when, almost immediately, two pairs of martins claimed the apartments for their own and successfully raised young that first summer.

When the martins returned the following spring they brought friends and the colony began to flourish. Before long, the apartments were filled to capacity. Wilkinson installed additional aluminum condos. After they quickly filled, he added white plastic nesting gourds, and finally a second pole featuring more apartment houses and more plastic gourds. Today, the complex has grown to an 80-unit, purple martin boomtown. Once again, this popular Winnebago County bird resort is becoming filled to capacity.

"I'm not sure why this particular project has taken off so quickly," said Wilkinson. "I was inspired to become a purple martin landlord by my father-in-law [Don Dearborn of Nevada, Iowa]. Although he has lots of martins now, it took Don six years to get the first birds to nest. When he heard I had martins right away, he was just elated."

Historically, purple martins nested in natural tree cavities across much of North

America. But as exotic bird species like house sparrows and starlings began to invade natural sites, nesting martins soon shifted to artificial condos. Wilkinson notes that purple martin survival is now totally dependent upon human landlords. Even here, martins are still forced to compete with exotic species for space. An important component to managing a successful colony is the persistent removal of unwanted sparrow nests.

But perseverance has its reward. By late July, sparrows had become pretty much a non-issue and Wilkinson can lean back to enjoy the fruits of his labor. It is currently the peak of the fledging season, and this year's crop of young martins are emerging daily. So far, around 250 birds have fledged from the backyard colony this summer.

"Right now is just a great time of year to watch the birds," says Wilkinson. "First thing in the morning, they just kind of hang out. Then they start to fly, and by mid-morning most will have left for the day. The parents teach the young to catch insects and also take them to visit other colonies. After about two to three weeks on the wing the young began to disappear. A lot of them will end up spending the winter in Brazil.

"For me, this is very therapeutic," said Wilkinson. "It's really something to see how these birds live and interact. It just makes you forget about everything else."

One person can make a difference. To learn more about purple martins and tips on becoming a purple martin landlord, visit the Purple Martin Conservation Association web site at www.purplemartin.org

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[Electronic photo available]

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD – SIGNATURE SPOKESMAN OF THE SUMMER WETLAND

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Inch for inch, square foot for square foot, no Iowa ecosystem hosts a greater abundance of life than the prairie marsh.

Summer is the time of renewal. And although our native wetlands teem with countless varieties of plant, insect, mammal, reptile, and amphibian life, it is the birds that clearly command our attentions. Of all the bird species that inhabit our state's marshlands, perhaps none is more unique or intriguing than the yellow-headed blackbird.

Rare or nonexistent across much of the state, yellow-heads are most common in northern Iowa's prairie pothole region. True colony nesters, they provide the human observer with a fascinating opportunity to study complex bird behavior and social interactions.

When it comes to choosing which particular wetland to call home, breeding yellow-heads appear to choose quality over quantity. Regardless of acreage, a marsh containing dense stands of healthy, emergent vegetation is a critical requirement. The individual size [population] of a breeding colony may vary from as few as a dozen or so males to more than a hundred.

The nest of the yellow-head is always located over water, and it is the female who selects the site. Although males seem to take an interest in nest building, I have never seen one contribute to the effort. Construction begins as the female collects coarse, water logged sedges which she carefully weaves into several stalks of cattails. A sturdy platform soon emerges which ultimately provides the cornerstone for the sturdy, nine-inch basket. As sunlight evaporates the moisture, this inner foundation shrinks and is drawn tight to its cattail anchor. The completed nest is a work of art.

By late July, young-of-the-year birds are out of the nest, self sufficient, and ready to accompany the adults on the southward migration. Another summer nesting cycle has passed. As the last yellow-heads depart for the winter, local marshlands become strangely silent.

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